COL. CARPENTER'S REVENGE.

[N. Y. Post.]

The colonel and the cap'n never had been very good friends. They differed in politics, you know. The colonel was republican to his backbone, as all his family had been before him, an' the cap'n was a red-hot democrat. Lively times they had when 'lection day come round; you'd thought the futur' o' the nation 'pended on the way the vote went in that one town. The year they was put up again' one another for representative was a regular caution—I reckon 'twas done as much for the fun o' the fight as anythin', an' if that was what folks wanted they had their wish. But the cap'n come off the best man, an' the colonel chalked it down on the score he had again' him, an' vowed he'd be even with him some day. That was just after the ice-house business had made matters kinder personal 'tween 'em.

There was a good deal o' hard feelin' 'bout that ice house, an' you couldn't wonder. It belonged to a dozen o' the men o' the town; but as it stood on the colonel's ground, he had a big share o' the management an' 'sponsibility, an' it was a business that paid him well. They all made money out of it from the first. The situation, you see, was so uncommon fine, not a quarter of a mile from the mouth o' Back river, where it empties into the Connecticut, an' the channel up close to the dock, so the biggest schooners could sail up an' get their supplies.

Well, all went on prosperous as could be an' would 'a' been prosperin' still if Cap'n Zekiel Cary hadn't got it into his head 'twould be a good thing to consolidate with a New York company. They didn't all agree with him, an' Col. Carpenter stood out against it to the last, but the cap'n he owned a good deal o' stock, an' some o' the party he overpersuaded, an' some he jus bore down, without takin' the trouble to persuade 'em at all, an' one way'n another he carried his p'int an' 'twas done. I can't go over all the particulars now, but it didn't take the city company long to settle 'em, an' the old ice house was shut up with a law upon it that they couldn't never open another there without the consent o' the men in New York.

'Twas a pretty mean piece o' work all round, an' so they felt it, an' the cap'n an' colonel had it between 'em hot an' heavy. The cap'n said 'twas just an' error in judgment; he hadn't meant to lose by it; an' the colonel up an' told him he guessed his losses wa'n't heavy enough to hurt him, which was the same as sayn' he'd been dishonest, an' wa'n't hardly fair. 'Tain't never best to 'cuse folks up an' down till you've got your proofs in your pocket.

But as I was sayin', the colonel——. What was he colonel of? Why, in the militia to be sure, when he was a young man, an' the cap'n commanded a sloop 'fore he was married; then he sold out an' went into the dry goods business. But, as I was sayin', the years went by, an' spite o' the colonel's spirit, the cap'n's end always 'peared to be kep' up the best, till one night young Josiah Cary went home with Polly Carpenter from singin'-school, an' the colonel see 'em through the winder sayin' good-night at the gate. Then he knew he'd got a chance at last to score one. He didn't say nothin', but the next mornin' Polly was started off to boardin' school, an' she never knew, then nor afterward, that she owed her eddication to young Josiah.

'Twas precious little eddication Josiah could get himself, an' it made him feel bad, too; he'd set his heart on goin' to college, but his father wouldn't hear on't. The deestrick school hed be'n good enough for him, and he guessed 'twould do for his son. He wa'n't goin' to raise up no children o' his with high-flyin' notions—that was a cut at the colonel an' Polly—an' he pinned Josiah down on the farm an' kep' him there.

If the cap'n had any other children to look to, I reckon Josiah would broke away; but he was all there was, and I s'pose he had kind of a sense o' duty, for he buckled to an' did his best, an' farmin' in Connecticut means plenty o' hard work an' precious little time for foolin' if you're goin' to make it pay; but the cap'n he seemed to prosper in whatever he undertook.

The colonel hadn't had no luck since the ice house went to smash. He lost a power o' money there, an' wasted nigh as much over the 'lections, an' he wa'nt one that would ever get ahead much farmin' without somethin' outside to help along. He worked hard enough, but he had dreadful poor luck an' a large family dependin' on him—four children 'sides Polly, all of 'em girls, an' a married daughter whose husband had b'en out o' health ever since she took him. He meant well, but he never did nothin', an' they had three small children; so, takin' it all together, it cost the colonel a good deal to live.

II.

'Twas in the middle o' November when Polly come home. She'd be'n off all summer visitin' some friends, an' I reckon the difference must 'a' be'n kinder hard on her at first; but she pitched right in an' went to work. There was plenty she could do to help her mother, but it made her feel bad to see her father look so tired an' down in the mouth. It weighed on her mind that he'd spent so much on her when he n' the family was havin' such a hard time to get along. She felt she'd got to make it up to 'em somehow. The only one she wouldn't do for was her sister's husband; she had no patience with him, for it 'peared to her if he'd take more exercise an' less medicine 'twould be'n better for him an' all the rest. But she didn't dare tell nobody but her mother how she felt 'bout him, an' the colonel's wife only sighed.

"If you want to get married, child," sez she, "you must take such a husband as the Lord sends you, an' then make the best of him. Susan didn't do as well as we'd be'n glad to have her, but we'd ought to be thankful she didn't do no worse. Horace ain't a drinkin' man and his morals is good; you'd ought to 'member all that when you feel put-out with him."

Polly didn't mean to be wicked, but she couldn't help sayin' if the Lord was 'sponsible for all the husbands in the world, he'd showed pretty poor judgment in some cases. Her mother was dreadful shocked.

"Don't let me hear no more such talk as that, Polly Carpenter," sez she. "He sends crosses an' trials where they're needed, an' whatever shape they come in you've to consecrate 'em to the end they was meant for, an' work out your own salvation with fear an' tremblin'."

"All right," sez Polly; "if I get a husband like Susan's I'll consecrate him to his end without loss o' time, an' work out my own salvation with none o' his help an' company."

Josiah'd be'n lookin' forward to Polly's comin' home ever since she went away. He wa'n't one who went 'bout much with the young folks in the place, but he'd kinder kep' his mind fixed on her, an' soon's he heard she was back he begun to study how he was goin' to get a chance to meet her. He hadn't made up his mind how 'twas to be managed, when he got his opportunity one day quite unexpectedly.

He'd be'n up on Hickory hill workin' with his men, gettin' out railroad ties an' cord wood, an' as he was late 'bout goin' home to his dinner, he was takin' a short cut through the colonel's woods, when all to once he heard a great chatterin' an' laughin' ahead of him, an' he comes upon a whole crowd o' children creepin' around through the underbrush like a flock o' partridges. They was after wintergreen berries, an' Polly was with 'em, sittin' on a log with her lap full, tyin' 'em up into bunches an' droppin' 'em into a basket. She looked up kinder scared when she heard Josiah crashin' through the bushes. Then she see who 'twas an' smiled. Polly had a dreadful pretty smile. It laughed in her eyes and dimpled in her cheeks. You couldn't see it without wantin' to kiss her.

"Oh, it's you!" sez she.

But Josiah didn't answer for full a minute. He knew he was done for for good an' all.

"How do you do?" sez Polly, holdin' out her hand to him. "We're gettin' wintergreen to send up to the town hall tonight to be sold for the benefit of the heathen."

An' Josiah sat down beside her on the log an' wondered how he'd stood it all these years waitin' for her to come home.

'Twas gettin' on toward 4 o'clock, an' the afternoon sun slanted through the trees, an' the dry leaves rustled thick at their feet. Every once in a while one of the little girls would run up with a fresh handful o' leaves to pile in Polly's lap, an' Joshua forgot all 'bout his dinner an' his supper as well while they talked an' talked.

"I hope you'll come to see me," sez Polly when she bid him good-by. "I know so few folks in the town."

An' then, all to once, Josiah 'membered the colonel.

"I'll come if you an' your father'll let me," sez he.

"I have asked you," sez Polly, an' then she 'membered the cap'n. "Have you had any quarrel with my father?" sez she.

"I? Oh, no," sez Josiah, meetin' her eyes straight an' fair. "There's no reason why I shouldn't come that I know of."

Polly was real clever with her pencil, an' she was drawin' pictures that evenin' to 'muse the children. She did Franky playin' with his cat, an' their mother knittin' in the corner, an' Susan's husband takin' a bowl of boneset tea. An' then she did Cap'n Cary as she had seen him the day afore tryin' to scramble on to his horse, front o' the postoffice. The colonel laughed till he cried over that. Then the children went off to bed, an' Polly still sat at the table working over her papers.

"Who're you doin's now?" sez the colonel, comin' up behind her. "You can't beat that last?"

Polly looked up with a little start, but she give him that picture as she had the others, an' her father took it an' looked at it without a word. 'Twas full as good as any o' the rest, but there wasn't nothin' funny 'bout it. 'Twas only Josiah in his flannel shirt an' felt hat, his axe in his hand, his face turned as if he was listenin'.

"We met him up in the woods today," sez Polly, as the colonel didn't speak. "When I asked him to call he said he'd like to if you had no objection."

"What objection should I have?" sez the colonel, layin' down the picture. "He's well enough, far's ever I heard. Not one to set the great river afire, but he may be honester'n his father if he ain't so smart."

"He is honest," sez Polly, touchin' up the picture with her pencil.

The colonel looked round an' see the rest o' the family was gone to bed. Then he leaned back in his chair for a talk. He'd never said much to her afore 'bout the trouble 'tween him an' the cap'n, but I reckon he thought as matters stood she might's well know some o' the ins an' outs of it. I don't doubt he meant to tell her the story truthful an' unbiased, but his wrongs had be'n growin' on him all these years. He'd had a hard time an' he'd got it kinder fixed in his mind that the cap'n was 'sponsible for the whole on't. Well, Polly she was dreadful fond o' her father, an' she listened an' listened, her cheeks growin' redder an' her eyes shinin' with a fire that would scorched his enemies well if they'd be'n there handy.

"I ain't got nothin' in particular against Josiah, if you like him, 'an want him to come here," the colonel finished up; "but I thought you'd better know how matters stood 'tween the families."

Josiah's picture had be'n lyin' on the table all this time. 'Peared as if his eyes was on Polly, waitin' to see how she'd decide. She picked up the picture while the colonel was speakin' and tore it across from one end to t'other.

"I guess we don't want nothin' to do with none of 'em," she said, an' then she flung her arms 'round her father's neck an' fairly smothered him with kisses.

Josiah didn't wait long 'bout payin' his call, an' he had a talk with his father 'fore he started. His mother was dead—I don't know's I told you. The cap'n was sittin' 'fore the fire with his paper when Josiah come in.

"So you're off for the evenin', hey?" sez he, lookin' up.

"I'm goin' to see Polly Carpenter," sez Josiah.

The cap'n leaned back in his chair an' put both hands in his pockets.

"Serious intentions in that direction?" sez he.

"I want her for my wife," sez Josiah. "Have you any objections to my marryin'?"

"None," sez the cap'n. "The sooner the better. Have you any reason to s'pose you can get Polly Carpenter?"

"No," sez Josiah, "but I'm goin' to try."

The cap'n 'peared to be mightly tickled.

"Go ahead," sez he. "Get her if you can. She's a pretty girl, an' I've be'n told she's smart. It's time we had a woman in the house. The colonel will say it's the meanest trick we've played him yet!" an' the cap'n chuckled.

"Have we ever played him any tricks?" sez Josiah, lookin' at his father.

"He thinks we have," sez the capn', "so it 'mounts to the same thing, fur's his feelin's are concerned. You won't get his daughter without a sharp fight for her. If 'twas me, I shouldn't be 'fraid but I'd come out on top, but you—you take a little too much after your mother, Josiah."

The colonel come to the door when Josiah knocked, an' showed him into the sittin' room civil enough. All the family was there 'cept Polly, an' he sent Gusty, one o' Susan's children, to look for her. Gusty wa'n't gone but a minute. Aunt Polly was puttin' the baby to sleep, she said, an' shook her head at her not to speak for fear o' wakin' him. Josiah had a vision o' Polly in the quiet room overhead, singin' to the baby in her arms, an' he lost the drift o' the colonel's remarks, an' he answered he didn't know what to his questions.

The colonel waited fifteen minutes or so, then he guessed the baby must be 'sleep by that time, an' sent Gusty out again. Gusty come back.

"Aunt Polly's mankin' bread up for tomorrow," says she.

"Did you tell her who was here?" sez the colonel.

"Yes," sez Gusty; "she says she must be 'scused."

Josiah found his father up waitin' for him when he got home.

"Well, what luck?" he called, 'fore his son was fairly inside the door; "you didn't stay very late!"

Josiah knew he might's well tell him all 'bout it fust as last, little as he felt like talkin'. So he walked in an' got it over in the fewest words he could, while the cap'n sat an' listened, strokin' his black beard.

"Well," sez he, lookin' at Josiah kinder curious, "what you goin' to do 'bout it?"

"I'm goin' to try'n see her," sez Josiah, "an' find out whether she's pleasin' herself or her father."

"If you find out 'twas her father are you goin' to be beat by him?" sez the cap'n.

"No," sez Josiah.

"If you find out she was suitin' herself are you goin' to be beat by her?"

"I shouldn't trouble a girl to serve me like that but once," sez Josiah.

"Hum," sez the cap'n, "that's where you differ from me. I asked your mother fourteen times, an' she liked another man better inter the bargain, but she said yes in the end. It all 'pends on whether you want 'em enough to take the trouble."

"It's not that," sez Josiah, "but I couldn't torment a girl into havin' me! I shan't give in till I've seen her once more; if she tells me then she don't want nothin' to do with me, that'll settle it."

"You're a modest feller," sez the cap'n, "expectin' a girl to fall head an' ears in love with you, seein' you once, in your every-day clothes! How does she know whether she likes you or not? 'Course the colonel's goin' to head you off if he can—you knew that when you started. If you ain't man enough to hold on for your rights, the sooner you throw up your hand the better."

So Josiah laid in wait for a chance to see Polly, but day after day went by without his gettin' it. She was too busy to home to run round the country much, an' thinks likely she kep' closer'n she really need to 'bout that time.

III.

The weather was growin' colder'n colder. It had got well 'long into December an' everybody was gettin' ready for snow. It began at last, 'bout noon one day. Josiah was choppin' up in the woods as usual. He hadn't seen nothin' o' Polly all this while, an' the world 'peared to him to be a lonesome place that offered precious little compensation to folks that tried to live in it. He hadn't noticed the snow much till he started for home, an' 'twas comin' pretty fast by that time. He took the short cut through the colonel's wood lot, as he'd done ever since the afternoon he met Polly there, but the log where they sat was white with snow, an' the wind whistled in the tops o' the tall trees, an' shivered through the dry leaves hangin' on the young oak bushes, an' the prospect wa'n't noways cheerin'. 'Twas worse still when he come out o' the woods, for the storm was sweepin' 'cross the hills with nothin' to break its force, an' the snow was real deep already. The wind was rollin' it up into drifts like the waves o' the sea.

Josiah was lookin' 'bout when all to once he see somebody was ahead of him. 'Twas a queer lookin' figger—for a minute he couldn't tell whether 'twas a man or a woman, for it had a long coat down to its heels an' a red plaid shawl over its shoulders, an' a green an' yaller worsted comforter wound round its head an' neck, an' 'twas sittin' on the low stone wall emptyin' the snow out of its overshoes, an' groanin' as if 'twas in terrible sufferin'.

"Horace Comstock!" sez Josiah, for it turned its head as he come up, an' he see 'twas Susan's husband; "what you here for?" sez he.

"T'ain't for no wish o' mine, you'd better believe!" sez Horace standin' up an' puttin' on his mittens; "I reckon my life's more consequence 'n a flock of sheep, but you couldn't make Polly Carpenter think so. You wouldn't s'pose nobody'd send a dog abroad in such weather, let alone draggin' out a feller creetur! But that girl ain't got no more feelin' than a stone wall."

"Is she here with you now?" sez Josiah.

"O, laws, yes! she's up on the hills somewheres. I told her I wa'n't goin' no further, I'd climbed 's high's I could—O, what an awful storm—I'm freezin' to death!" an' he groaned an' beat his hands together till 'twas painful to hear him. Josiah stood lookin' down at him with his hands in his coat pockets.

"Where's the colonel?" sez he.

"Laid up in bed with a cold—as I shall be tomorrer. He ain't be'n out for a week, an' if Polly'd done as she'd oughter an' hired a man to look out for things, we'd be'n all right. But no, she must up an' say she can 'tend to everything with my help, an' she's be'n havin' me out in all weathers, glad of a chance to torment me. O, massy me! If her sister'd be'n like her, I'd never married inter that family, I can tell you!"

"You'd better go home," sez Josiah; "I'll look out for the sheep."

"Will you really?" sez Horace, so pleased he couldn't hardly believe his ears; "well, now, I always said the Cary's wa'n't so black as they was painted!" but he didn't lose no time in gettin' off 'fore Josiah could change his mind, though if h'd only known he needn't be'n worried.

Josiah wa'n't long in findin' Polly. He knew the sheltered places where the sheep would go, and he heard her callin' just 'fore he got to her.

"Horace! Horace! come here quick! There's three little lambs here an' I can't carry 'em all."

The sheep was huddled together close under a ledge, an' Polly was standin' in the midst of 'em, with one o' the lambs in her arms, a cloud o' snow whirlin' off the rock over her head, an' a big drift curlin at her feet.

She didn't look cold an' sufferin'. The pinkest roses you ever see would no more'n matched her cheeks, an' her eyes was all the brighter for the storm, but she didn't look pleased when she see Josiah.

"I was callin Horace," sez she; "did you see him."

"Yes," sez Josiah, "I met him a minute ago; he's gone home."

Polly's face lengthened out at that considerably, I can tell you.

"Gone home!" sez she. "Why, how—" an' then she stopped kinder sudden.

"I'll help you with the sheep," sez Josiah.

But Polly had drawn herself up as stiff as the colonel.

"Thank you, I don't need to trouble you; I shall manage somehow," sez she.

"You won' be troublin' me, an' you can't possibly manage by yourself," sez Josiah.

He didn't ask her no more questions; he jest picked up the lambs. She wanted to carry one of 'em, but he wouldn't let her, an' started the sheep off down the hill. There wa'n't no time to lose if they was goin' to get 'em home that night, an' he thanked his stars he'd happened to come that way—an' I guess she did, too, in her heart.

Time the sheep was in the yard, an the bars put up behind 'em twas dark, an' Polly was so tired she could hardly stand. She knew she ought to say something to Josiah, for what she'd 'a' done without his help she didn't know. But she hesitated an' hesitated an' couldn't seem to find words to begin with, while the storm whirled round an' round 'em, shuttin' 'em in, as if there wasn't nobody but them two in the world. Polly was leanin' 'gainst the bars with one hand on the top rail, "I—I ought to thank you," sez she.

Josiah put his hand over the little red mitten an' squeezed it up tight.

"I don't want any thanks," sez he; "if I could take care of you as—I'd like to ——" Then he broke off short, "Go in an' get warm an' rested," sez he, "an' send out your sister's husband; I'll help him do the chores tonight. I want to have a talk with him. He ought to be man enough to do 'em by himself."

Polly looked up to him kinder doubtful. She was vexed with herself afterward to think she had give in to him an' did as he told her, but I reckon she was too tired to stand disputin'.

She never knew what he said to Susan's husband, but his argyments 'peared to have weight to 'em, for though Horace moaned an' groaned, an' tied himself up in every shawl there was in the house, he did the chores reg'lar's clock work, an' Polly didn't have to go out no more.

The colonel was sick all winter, an' his family had a pretty hard time, but 'twould be'n worse still if they couldn't have 'pended on Horace. For not only did he do the reg'lar chores, as I told you, an' never forget the kindlin'-wood, but he brought in the eggs night after night, without havin' to be minded, sometimes many's two dozen at a time—they never had known their hens to lay so well durin' the winter season—an' more'n once he brought in a pair o' fat chickens, all dressed an' ready for dinner—he 'sprised 'em every day in the week, doin' something they hadn't 'spected of him.

Susan worried herself most to death over him, fearing he was goin' to die, an' Miss Carpenter was all the time p'intin' out to Polly how 'twa'n't safe to judge folks. Even Polly herself begun to think p'aps she hadn't done him justice.

Josiah didn't come to the house no more. Polly kinder wondered 'bout that, he'd bo'n so friendly, but she s'posed he thought it hadn't paid.

IV.

Well, as I was sayin', 'twas spring 'fore the colonel was able to get out, an' Polly was a happy girl when he was 'bout again. It had be'n a great relief to him to know Horace was doin' so well, an' when he'd be'n all round an' seen things really was lookin' as they should, he praised him up to the skies, an' Polly really was 'shamed o' herself, that she couldn't feel no more confidence in him.

She was thinkin' it over one afternoon, when she was up in the store-room gettin' a pan o' dried apples. The store-room was the only place in the house that looked down on to the barn-yard, an' while she was thinkin' Polly went to the winder to see if Horace was doin' his chores. As I said, she'd distrusted him all along, but 'twas a shock to her when she see Josiah was milkin'. There couldn't be no mistake 'bout it, for 'twas light enough to see, an' his broad shoulders an' gray felt hat didn't bear no resemblance to Horace in his shawls an' comforters. Polly took her pan o' dried apples down stairs an' set 'em on the kitchen table. Then she went through the house very quiet an' out by the side door, not to 'tract 'tention. Then she run to the back o' the barnyard an' climed over the wall, an' so round the corner o' the stables an' up behind Josiah.

"Good evenin'," sez he, lookin' up as if 'twas all a matter o' course, but Polly couldn't wait for manners.

"You've be'n doin' this ever since you helped me get the sheep home last winter," sez she, breathless with runnin' so fast, an' tremblin' all over, she was so excited.

Josiah set the pail o' milk up on the wall very careful an' then he come back an' stood lookin' down at her.

"It wasn't fair," sez Polly, "to deceive us into takin' favors you knew we wouldn't accept! How dared you do it!"

"You haven't accepted anything," sez Josiah, "your brother-in-law's 'sponsible for all I've done."

"You didn't do it for him!" sez Polly, an' then she colored up as red as fire an' wondered how she come to be such a fool as to say that.

But Josiah didn't take no advantage, only he looked down at her, an' he had dreadful pretty blue eyes, honest and true, an' they sent a queer pain through Polly's heart 'fore she knew it.

"I did it for your father," sez he. "Though I don't expect you to believe me, I've always liked him. I did it for you, because I couldn't take care of you nor help you in any other way. But if I was to tell you I liked you, you'd laugh in my face or else be angrier 'n you are now."

"You mustn't come here any more!" sez Polly in a great hurry, her breath comin' quicker 'n quicker. I know—I'm sure—you mean to be kind, but we can't take favors——"

"Suppose you grant one, then, for a change," sez Josiah, an' Polly looked as if she was scared, but he went on, "You know you can't 'pend on your sister's husband. If you send me off, an' if your father sees you doin' such work, he'll start out an' do it for you, when he'd ought to be takin' care o' himself in the house. For his sake, I reckon you'd better leave things as they are."

"Oh, I can't," sez Polly, her color comin' an' goin'. "He wouldn't like me to—I must do the work some way without his knownin'."

Josiah was wishin' he could pick her up in his arms as he had the lambs that night, an' carry her off where he could take care of her, an' protect her from everything that hurt an' troubled her, but he only said:

"There's one other way I can do. Your brother-in-law's asleep now up on the hay. I'll go and see if I can scare him into bracin' up for a while. I can tell him the colonel has 'spicions o' what's be'n goin' on."

"Tell him if the colonel finds out, he'll kill him!" sez Polly. "Oh, if you can do that, I will be 'bliged to you."

Josiah laughed in a sad kind of way to himself, an' Polly said good-night in a hurry, an' ran off fast as she could, fear Horace should wake up an' see her. She never noticed the colonel, who'd be'n standin' by the bars all this time in the shadder o' the house. He'd followed on after Polly when she went out the side door, thinkin' he'd go with her for a little walk; but when he come up to the bars an' see who was there, he stopped—not that he was an underhand kind o' man, but when a daughter o' his talked to a Cary he wanted to be round. He didn't have much to say that evenin'. He was thinkin' an' thinkin' to himself. "The boy looks like his mother," sez he. "If 'twa'n't for the cap'n——"

He waited till all the rest was gone off to bed, for that was the time he always took for his talks with Polly; then sez he, "Have you ever noticed young Josiah Cary?" quite sudden, as she was lightin' his pipe for him, an' it pretty near cost him his evenin' smoke, for Polly give a dreadful guilty start, an' down went the pipe an' the terbaccer all over the floor.

"Oh," sez Polly, and dropped on her knees to pick it up. "Why, of course I've seen him, father," lookin' into the bowl o' the pipe to be sure 'twas empty 'fore she gave it back to him.

"He 'pears to me to be the likeliest young man in the place," sez the colonel; "I didn't know but I'd prejudiced you 'gainst him by what I told you when you first come home, but he ain't 'sponsible for his father's actions. He'd ought to be'n my son by rights, 'stead o' the cap'n's."

The colonel took his pipe out o' Polly's hand an' filled it himself this time. He didn't say any more till he'd got it lighted an' drawin' well. Then he leaned back in his chair an' watched her sweep up the hearth.

"The cap'n always felt that havin' a son gave him a kind of advantage over me an' my girls," sez the colonel. "I reckon you could even up the difference now, Polly, if you was a mind to."

"Well," sez the cap'n next night when he see Josiah hadn't been off anywhere as usual, "your job's up, is it? Discharged with a reprimand, eh? Just as I expected. You'd ought to took a little more after me if you was goin' to get ahead of the colonel."

He didn't say no more, but he got on his horse the next mornin' an' rode over to the Carpenters. 'Twas a reg'lar March day, the sun shinin' an' the wind blowin' the dust up in clouds. The colonel was 'lone in the front room, sittin' by the winder in the sun. He see the cap'n comin' through the gate an' he let him in himself.

"Why, how do you do, colonel!" sez the cap'n, bustlin' in. "I'm glad to see you round again. You've been havin' a real siege of it, I guess."

"I'm better, thank ye," sez the colonel, very stately. "What can I do for you, Cap'n Cary?"

"Well, nothin' for me in person," sez the cap'n, takin' the chair pointed out to him. "I come to you this mornin'," colonel, as man to man. We've had our differences in years past, an' we've fought 'em out. I don't see's we need to bear grudges towards one 'nother no longer. I ain't got no ill will to you, or I shouldn't be nere——"

"It's very handsome of you," sez the colonel in his civilest tone; "be so good as to mention your business."

"I'm comin' to the p'int," sez the cap'n. "My son has a hankerin' after your daughter. My business is to ask you if you're willin' to let bygones be bygones. I don't pertend I ain't heard how you've thought I overreached you. I've be'n told that you're waitin' to get your revenge on me. You've got your chance now, if you choose to take it, or will you give it up, colonel, and let the young folks be happy if they can?"

Sez the colonel, "I'm going to have my revenge."

"Then there's no more to be said," sez the cap'n, gettin' up. "Your girl won't listen to Josiah without your leave."

The colonel's gray head was turned away; he was lookin' out o' the winder.

"My little Polly!" sez he to himself; then he turned back and waved his hand towards the cap'n. "Sit down," sez he, "an' listen. There ain't no use in talkin' 'bout settlin' the differences 'tween you an' me without evenin' up the matter square. I don't expect you to understand me. We're men of a different stamp. If I'd been in your shoes today comin' an' askin' for a favor o' you, 'twould hurt me more'n any trick you could played me, do your 'cutest! An' if you'd granted the favor—I believe on my soul, I'd shot you 'fore I'd took it! I measure my revenge by my standard, not by yours. I don't let myself down to your level. Your son has my free consent to speak to my daughter, which clears off a few obligations he's been layin' me under this winter, an' settles up my account with you."

"Well," sez the cap'n that night when he was talkin' it over with Josiah, "I own I come pretty near tellin' him if I wa'n't on his level, I could manage to reach up high enough to hit him, but I kep' my temper. If he was willin' to do the square thing by you I wa'n't goin' to spile your chances. He's got a cur'us mind an' I kinder humored him. I told him his coals o' fire was scorchin' me brown, an' if he hadn't no objections, I'd like to kinder ease 'em up a little. That old ice house business had be'n weighin' on my mind all these years, keepin' me 'wake nights, an' if so be he'd give his consent, an' the rest o' the comp'ny'd go in, I'd put up a saw-mill on the old foundation an' resk but 'twould pay as well as ever the ice did. 'Twas full as good a place for one business as 'other. He didn't commit himself 'bout it, but I see he thought weel o' the plan, so I guess peace is declared, an' it's left for you an' Polly to cement it solid. I reckon we're on top, as usual," saz the capt'n, kinder doubtful, stirrin' the fire. "But there's no denyin' that, 'cordin' to his way o' lookin' at it, the colonel had his revenge."

DIVING NINETY-FIVE FEET.

Straight Downward Header of Thomas Burns at the London Aquarium.

London's latest thrill is derived from the feat of a man who dives down ninety-five feet from the roof of the Westminster aquarium into a narrow and comparatively shallow tank of water set in the floor of the building. The exploit calls for an astounding combination of nerve and skill, and is far more noteworthy than any of the bridge-jumping acts which have been so tiresomely frequent of late years.

The diver is Thomas Burns, who has acquired considerable notoriety as a diver from bridges and as an expert swimmer, and not a little fame from his having saved no fewer than thirty-two lives during his career. He is a sturdily built man some twenty-six years of age. He has frequently dived from bridges over a hundred feet high into rivers, but his dive at the acquarium is a very difficult affair. He stands on a tiny platform suspended among the iron girders of the roof, ninety-five feet above the floor, and sees below him, instead of a broad, deep river, a mass of flaring, bewildering lights, a sea of upturned faces, and in the wooden floor of the stage what seems from the height to be a mere slot the tank which he must suddenly land in. The tank is 18 feet long, 8 feet wide and 7 feet deep. The diver actually dives, takes a header and does not drop feet foremost, after the manner of the bridge jumpers. The marvelous precision required to land in the tank is easily appreciated, as is also the fate that would befall him should he miss his mark.

Burns is hoisted up to his aerial perch by means f a rope and pulley. The spectators can barely discern him through that distance of perpendicular space. They see him peer over the platform edge, then they see his toes project over, he crouches down, and then he glides off the platform head foremost, and comes plunging down with stiffly outstretched arms, and hands meeting in front of him in regular "header" fashion. But when little more than half way down his feet fall over his back toward his head, he turns almost completely over, and before the murmur of excitement and horror that is the usual accompaniment to the dive has voiced itself he strikes the water with his shoulders and back with a prodigious thud. He skims just under the surface of the water, seeming barely to enter it, and comes up face upward. He scarcely breathes hard after the tremendous exploit, and goes off immediately to give an exhibition of fancy swimming in another part of the building. The wonderful skill, the superb pluck, and the unmistakable element of danger involved in the feat, together with the not remote prospect of a horrible catastrophe, bring crowds to behold this latest sensation.

The Very Best People.

[N. Y. Press.]

Husband—"Have you completed your list of persons to be invited to the reception?"

Wife—"Yes."

Husband—"You have invited only the best people?"

Wife—"The very best."

Husband (examining the list)—"And these are all?"

Wife—"All, excepting the two detectives, who are to be here incog to see that nothing is stolen."

A Cinch.

[Puck.]

Belle—"I'll bet you a kiss against a box of gloves that crinoline cannot be introduced."

Jack—"That's not a fair wager. If I should win I couldn't get near enough to you to collect my bet."

HIS INEXORABLE GREED.

HOW A NEW YORKER STARVED HIMSELF TO LAY UP GOLD.

Dying at the Age of Seventy and Leaving a Fortune of $150,000 to Charity—A Spendthrift in Youth and a Miser in After Life.

The miser, William Gillies, who died suddenly on March 4 while standing in line at the paying teller's window at the East River bank, and who astonished the Howard mission and home for little wanderers, 206 Fifth-ave.; the American missionary society, 108 Bilble house; the American tract society and the American bible society, by bequeathing to them most of a fortune of $150,000 which he had amassed, and which only one or two persons knew he possessed, so meanly had he carried himself in dress and living, was a most remarkable character. Those who knew him, says the New York *Post*, declare that there was not in New York a man so cursed with an inexorable greed for money, to obtain which he indulged in the most heartless cruelty and lived in parsimonious wretchedness.

Gillies was seventy years old when he died. His manner of living in his youth, it is related, was diametrically the opposite of that of his old age. Before thirty he was a jolly good fellow, who dressed well and spent his money freely. He was born in England of a Scotch father and an English mother, people in moderate circumstances. They came to this country when their son was ten years old.

When thirty years old Gillies began his determination to save his money. He opened his account in the Bowery savings bank, where he soon accumulated quite a sum of money. He was a journeyman sail-maker by trade, plying this business until he was fifty years old, and earning $3.50 per day. Living was cheap in those days, good board and rooms being plenty at $3.50 per week on Bleecker-st., then a fashionable thoroughfare. Gillies lived there.

Gillies' first financial venture was to become the pessessor of fire insurance stock which then paid 10 per cent. dividends annually. It was then that his passion for money first began to manifest itself to those who were about him. It is said that when he used to hear the fire bells he would jump out of his bed and anxiously wonder whether his company had any risks in the fire, invariably going out to investigate if it were before midnight. At the breakfast table his fellow-guests, who knew of his habit, used to tease him by suddenly telling him that two blocks had been burned that night. When fire stock no longer paid so well he sold it and bought bonds. He then began to be a usurer. He lent his money to his employers or his fellow-workmen, getting 5 per cent. a month. Woe to the man who fell into his clutches in this manner. He followed his victim like a cat a mouse. He would get a man to give his note, watch him until he was in a corner, and then compel him to give a bill of sale of all his effects and rent his business place from Gillies at an enormous rental, until the usurer had possessed himself of every dollar the man had. In this way he ruined almost every man he came into contact with. His last victim was Samuel Hall of 10 Cedar-st., who died of a broken heart, it was said, in consequence. Those who knew Gillies say the richer he grew the more miserly he became.

During the draft riots in 1863 Gillies was forced to furnish a substitute. He later got back the money which he had paid, but he never forgave the government for causing him to spend the money in the first instance. He would walk the streets cursing President Lincoln and all the other republicans. For the last twenty years no one knew where he lived. His invariable answer to any inquiry respecting his address was: "You can always find me at Vermilyea's between 1 and 2 o'clock, and at Hall's, 10 Cedar-st., at 4 o'clock." He never could be found after that. It is said that he used to sit in Madison square in summer and in Cooper institute in winter, until 10 o'clock at night. His eating was after an astonishingly frugal manner. When he died a Park Row restaurant ticket was found in his pocket gauged and punched to the extent of 1c, 2c and 3c on each occasion that the ticket was used. He dressed extremely miserably. In buying a pair of shoes he would say: "Give me the thickest soles you have got for the money"—$1.50. When the shoes became worn he would sew them up with wire many a time. The last waistcoat he had was worn thirteen years by him; it had five fronts put in it and four backs. He would buy only paper collars, and he wore each one a whole week, then turned it inside out and wore it another week. He never wore a white shirt. He boasted also that the colored handkerchief he used cost but 5 cents, and that he had used it four years, and without washing.

It was his custom, if he could lend money at a usurious interest, to go to one of the big trust companies and with his gilt-edged securities borrow money at 2 per cent., then lend this out with an enormous interest, his bonds meanwhile drawing interest. He never would indulge in real estate investments, fearing some one would thus get a hold on him and sue him. "I only want that kind of property which can be turned into money in an hour," he was wont to say.

One who knew of his wealth once asked him how he would dispose of it. "Leave it for educational purposes," was his reply. "Well, you will want to be decently buried, any way?" was next asked. "Bury me in a pork barrel and dump me off the dock," was the laconic reply. Another one asked him if he had no relatives to whom he might leave his money. His answer was: "If I thought I had a relative who would get my money, I would burn it up." That some money was left to religious institutions surprised those who knew him well very much. A friend says he never attended church, and was opposed to any person disposed to be religious; especially opposed was he to clergymen, classifying them all as "skins," frauds and humbugs."

But if Gillies wanted a mean funeral he did not get it. It cost $500, the coffin alone costing $200. Said one who superintended the funeral: "I suppose if Gillies knew of the expense he would rise from his grave. We put on his dead body the finest clothes he ever had."

Gillies is described as having been about five feet nine inches tall, sharp featured, with a prominent nose and cold, calculating blue-gray eyes, perfectly devoid of expression. He was, however, very intelligent and was a first-rate arithmetician.

In for a Feast.

[Street & Smith's Good News.]

Little Dick—"I'm goin' down to aunty's tomorrow, if mamma will let me."

Little Dot—"What do you want to go there for?"

Little Dick—"Aunty said in her letter that her house was so full of rats and mice that cake wasn't safe anywhere."

Relieved of Worry.

[Street & Smith's Good News.]

Adorer (feeling his way)—"I—er—suppose your sister does not like my coming here so often, does she?"

Little Brother (confidentially)—"Oh, you needn't worry about sister. She can endure 'most anybody."